

Colombian military and the paramilitary forces in the country. The Colombian military has been taking steps to sever its ties with the paramilitaries, but I am worried that those steps have not translated into meaningful progress on the ground. As the United States considers supporting the counter-insurgency operations of the Colombian military, we must guarantee that Colombia takes seriously its obligation to seek out and prosecute the paramilitaries. And we must remember that by most accounts, the paramilitaries today are more responsible than any other terrorist group for the massive war crimes committed in the country.

We must also ensure that the Colombian government commits its resources to a more robust investment in its own institutions. We must never substitute our own assets or personnel for an appropriate level of investment by Colombia in its own future. This must include domestic support to institutions of justice, and for the protection of civilians, as well as responsible military support to defend the civilian population from rebel and paramilitary attacks.

Finally, we must do more to ensure that communities that have already been so hard-hit by the conflict have access to development opportunities to rebuild their lives. Alternative development must be a cornerstone of any effective counter-narcotics campaign. Without alternative development, displaced communities will have only one rational economic option: to turn to the lucrative but illegal cultivation of the coca that drug lords are so eager to buy and protect. Quite simply, we must give battered rural communities a viable economic alternative to coca or poppy cultivation if we are ever to bring the wars in Colombia to an end. To date, our investment in such development has been insufficient. And perhaps as a result, we have also made little progress in stemming the flow of drugs. Without more of a social investment in alternative development, I fear that the coca fumigation program that is being supported by the United States will merely shift drug cultivation into even more remote and ecologically sensitive areas of the country.

So I rise today to congratulate the people of Colombia on their successful Presidential election in May. That democratic institutions continue to function in the midst of such violence and intimidation is an impressive tribute to the Colombian people. But as the United States moves to support our new colleagues in the incoming government in Colombia, we must continually ask ourselves whether our intervention is achieving our policy goals, and whether it is making a difference to the lives of average Colombians.

Carefully crafted U.S. support for Colombia can make a difference. Indeed, it must make a difference. But we must monitor the effects of that support very closely, because neither the U.S.

taxpayer nor the vast communities in Colombia that have already been devastated by the war can afford to see such a significant U.S. investment in Colombia fail. We cannot and must not abandon Colombia. But at the same time, we cannot delude ourselves about the efficacy of our policy thus far. Critics of U.S. policy in Colombia, and in many cases I have been among them, raise valid questions about the commitment of the military to the rule of law and to protecting civilians. They raise important questions about the consequences of fumigation and the economic prospects for farmers who agree not to plant coca. It is our responsibility to weigh these points and to answer these questions, and where necessary, to adjust our policy so that we get it right. For Americans and for Colombians, the stakes are too high to do otherwise.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of last year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred in January 1998 in Springfield, IL. A gay man was abducted, tortured, and robbed. The attacker, Thomas Goacher, 27, was charged with a hate crime, aggravated kidnapping, armed robbery and aggravated battery in connection with the incident.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

#### NATIONAL ASKING SAVES KIDS DAY

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, yesterday was the second annual National Asking Saves Kids Day or ASK Day. ASK is a national public health campaign that urges parents to ask their neighbors and community members if they have a gun in the home before sending their child over to play. The ASK campaign helps to enable parents to protect their children from the danger of a gun that is not safely stored. This is a sensible step toward preventing gun violence. According to PAX, a non-political organization that promotes solutions to the problem of gun violence and sponsors the ASK campaign, over 40 percent of American homes with children have guns. Many of these weapons are kept unlocked and loaded. Child access to these firearms

is one reason why children in the U.S. are more likely to die of gun violence than from all natural causes combined. In recognition of National ASK Day, parents, children, community leaders, and neighbors across the nation planted flowers as a symbol of the more than 3,000 children that PAX estimates could be saved through the simple message of the ASK campaign.

It is critical that we do all we can to keep children from gaining unsupervised access to firearms. That is why I cosponsored Senator DURBAN's Child Access Prevention Act. Under this bill, adults who fail to lock up loaded firearms or an unloaded firearm with ammunition could be held liable if a weapon is taken by a child and used to kill or injure him or herself or another person. The bill also increases the penalties for selling a gun to a juvenile and creates a gun safety education program that includes parent-teacher organizations, local law enforcement and community organizations. This bill is similar to legislation President Bush signed into law as Governor of Texas. I support this bill and hope the Senate will act on it.

I know my colleagues will join me in recognizing National ASK Day, and I urge them to support Senator DURBAN's common sense gun safety legislation.

#### RATIFICATION OF NEW YORK TREATIES AGAINST THE SALE, TRAFFICKING, AND PROSTITUTION OF CHILDREN AND AGAINST THE USE OF CHILDREN IN COMBAT

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, it gives me great pleasure to hail the ratification of the Optional Protocol Against the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography by the U.S. Senate this week. I applaud the strong leadership of Senator BIDEN, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator HELMS, the Ranking Member of that Committee, as well as Senator BOXER in bringing this new treaty to fruition.

The use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic purposes is included in the universal definition of the worst forms of child labor in the International Labor Organization's Convention 182 which this Senate ratified in 1999 on a 96-0 vote. Therefore, it is altogether fitting and proper that we now follow through and adopt this new instrument of international law to crackdown worldwide against the despicable acts of trafficking and prostituting of children.

This Optional Protocol gives special emphasis to the criminalization of the sale and trafficking of children as well as child prostitution and pornography. It also stresses the importance of improved international cooperation and coordination to combat the sexual exploitation of children everywhere in the world, while also promoting heightened awareness, more information